

2479
.N6

STUDIES
IN VERSE

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

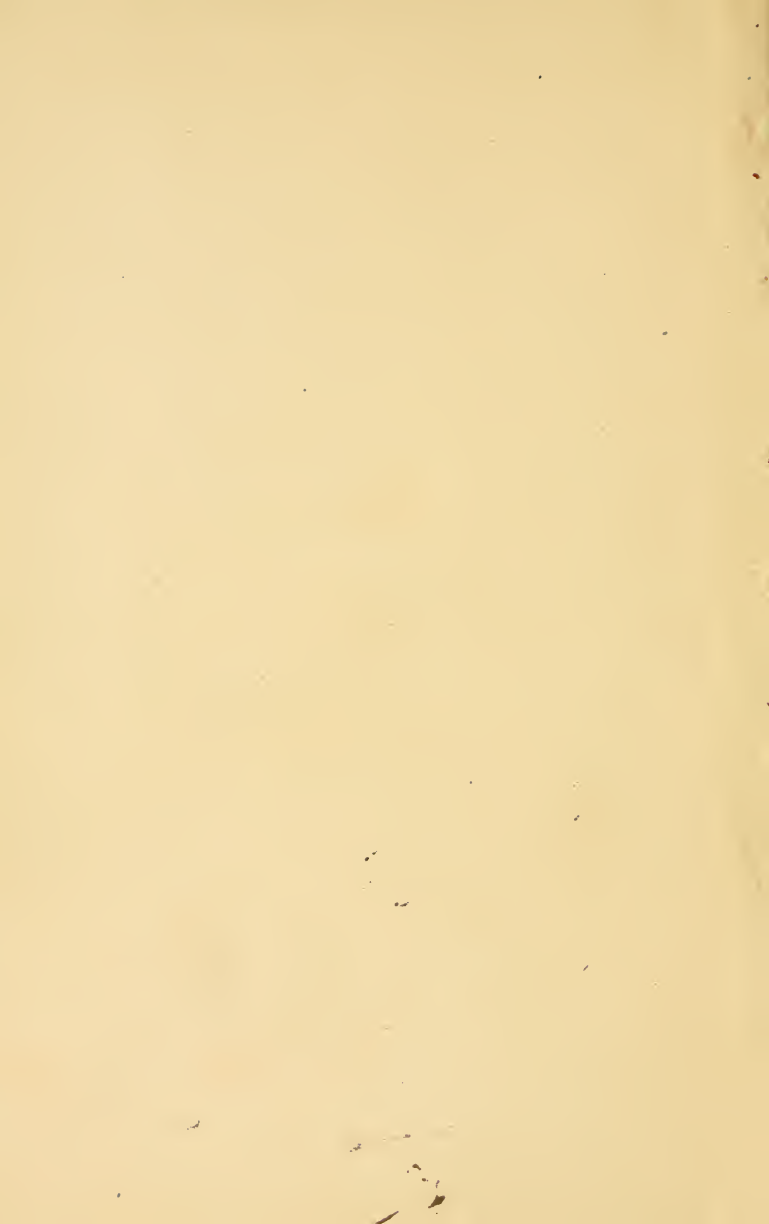
PS 2479
Chap. Copyright No.

Shelf *N6*

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.







STUDIES IN VERSE.

BY

CHARLES QUIET.

*presented for
(Charles Henry Hayes)*

33



PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.

1878.

π

PS 2479
N6

Copyright, 1878, by J. B. LIPPINCOTT & Co.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE PRODIGAL	5
TO A FIREFLY	6
SONNET	7
MY SOLDIER	8
THE TROUT	10
THE BUMBLE-BEE	11
STRAWBERRIES, GROWING UPON GRAVES	12
FAILURE	13
INSTEAD	17
SING TO ME, DEAREST	18
JEALOUSY	19
TIRED	20
DROUGHT	20
BEFORE WAKING	21
MY CREED	22
SUNRISE	24
CORNPLANTER	25
SNOW	27
POET AND LILY	28
HEINE (Buch der Lieder)	30
CHURCH-BELLS	31
MOONRISE	32
THE WALK	33
WHY?	36
MOONLIGHT	38
LOCUST-BLOSSOMS	40
FAITH	41
THE SCHOOL-HOUSE	42

	PAGE
VOICES OF THE FOREST	45
LAWYER AND POET	56
TWO THOUGHTS	57
TO A FRIEND ON HIS WEDDING-DAY	58
MORNING	59
A SUMMER NIGHT	61
POESY	62
BUT	63
WITHERED VIOLETS	64
WITH A COPY OF WALTON'S "ANGLER"	65
SUSPENSE	66
THE HILL	67

THE PRODIGAL.

O MOTHER, wait until my work is done !
Loose thy strong arms that draw me to thy breast
Till I am ready to lie down and rest ;
Grudge not to me the kisses of the sun.
Fear not, fond earth, thy strong love holds me fast ;
Thou art mine heir,—I shall be thine at last.

O cousin roses ! thirst not for my blood
To dye your paling cheeks. O rank, wild grass !
Clutch not with greedy fingers as I pass.
And you, great hungry giants of the wood !
Let not your roots for my rich juices yearn.
Mine shall be yours, but you must wait your turn.

O roses, grasses, trees ! I am your kin,—
Your prodigal blood-cousin, now grown strange
With many wanderings through the lands of Change.
You lent me of your substance, and I've been
A wasteful steward ; yet I shall bring back
My whole inheritance,—you shall not lack.

Divide my all amongst you ; 'twas but lent
To me a while to use. Part heart and brain,
Matter and force, until there shall remain
Of me no shadow ; I am well content.
Order and chaos wage eternal strife ;
The end of living is to bring forth life.

Guardian of thoughts, immortal memory !
Keep thou immortal some good thought of mine,
Which, in oblivion's dark, may softly shine
Like the pale fox-fire of a rotting tree.
If thou do keep but one song-child alive,
In its sweet body shall my soul survive.

TO A FIREFLY.

AGAINST the boundless night
Thou, with stout heart, dost set thy tiny flame.
Brave little beacon ! thy one drop of light
Doth put my life to shame.

Though small thy lamp,
No brightest star may vaunt itself o'er thee,
As home, belated, to his grassy camp
Thou lightest the tired bee.

Thy mission no man knows
To judge of thee. The mites thy critics are ;
To the small folk that populate yon rose
Perhaps thou art a star.

Atom of the same light
That floods the world from the bright sun at noon,
Above the insect cities, thou, to-night,
Dost hang like a white moon.

The world of mites is glad
To see in its low heaven thy small spark.
My useless life—a smoking torch—doth add
But darkness unto dark.

SONNET.

THY spirit, love, is white as fresh fall'n snow.
Thine eyes—I know not of what gentle hue—
So light and lucid are, that I look through
And see, within, the still thoughts come and go
Across the mirror of thy soul, and know
Each thrill of joy, each quick, sharp stab of pain.
Oh, lily soul, with never spot nor stain
Within the chamber of thy memory !
My love for thee presumption seems and vain,
As through those secret rooms of thought I see
All saintly virtues move in silent train,—
Calm Faith, bright Hope, meek-eyed Humility,
Strong Truth, and Love, whose starry eyes divine
Light up my darkened life, though not for me they
shine.

MY SOLDIER.

THE day still lingers, though the sun is down,
Kissing the earth, and loth to say good-by ;
While night, impatient, shows her starry crown
Just glinting through the curtains of the sky.

I sit within the door and try to knit ;
Some sadness of the sky provokes my tears ;
And memory finds some subtle charm in it
To lead me back through melancholy years,

Until she brings me to that summer's day,
When a tall shadow fell across the floor,
Lingered a moment and then stole away,
Following my soldier through the open door.

My soldier ! He was all the war to me ;
His safety all the victory I craved.
Morn, noon, and night I prayed that I might see
My soldier—I forgot my country—saved.

When came a letter full of love and cheer,
Telling of victory with proud delight,
The mother's pride o'ercame the mother's fear,
And I was happy in my dreams that night.

But when none came, and news of battles fell
Around me like hot flakes of fire instead——
O God ! if I have loved my boy too well,
Put against that those days of awful dread.

My soldier ! and it seems but yesterday
His baby gums were mumbling at my breast.
I'm half persuaded now he's out at play,
And I have slept within and dreamt the rest ;

For it does seem so strange to me that he,
My baby, my rosy-cheeked and azure-eyed,—
The cherub boy I dandled on my knee,—
Should have become a hero and have died.

My chubby baby, prattling to his toys !
My stalwart soldier kissing me good-by !
My heart will have it she hath lost two boys,
And lends to grief a twofold agony.

And day by day, as the dear form I miss,
Fierce longing burns within me like a flame,
Till all the world I'd barter for a kiss,
And walk through fire to hear him call my name.

'Twere not so sad could I have watched his face,
Soothed his last hours, and closed his dear, dead eyes ;
And it would comfort me to mark the place
With a wild-rose bush where my darling lies.

But, knowing nothing, save that he is dead,
I long 'neath yonder daisy-dotted knoll
To rest in peace my old, grief-whitened head.
Earth hath no crumb of comfort for my soul.

THE TROUT.

Poor, speckled beauty of the brook !
In this dim solitude my heart is free
To pity thee, thus quivering on my hook
In voiceless agony.

Yet, they who pity not deserve
Not to be pitied ; when, my cannibal,
Didst thou from tender troutlings ever swerve
At pity's gentle call ?

Thou handsome brigand ! lurking in the dark
Of some deep pool, with stealthy, nervous fin,—
Hungry and cruel as a ravenous shark,—
To slaughter thine own kin ;

Or, with a sudden flash of ruby light,
Gleaming along the riffle's rugged crest,
Drawn from thy pebbly grotto by the sight
Of some moth's dusty breast.

How beautiful ! how heartless ! Like
Some human lives was thine. There be that lie
In wait, like thee, with hungry jaw, to strike
The heedless passer-by.

But wily fishermen do ply
In this our bigger brook, and oft, too late,
Greed finds, beneath Ambition's tempting fly,
The barbed hook of fate.

In fish and man one passion burns ;
Strong robs the weak, and, ere the spoil be done,
A stronger robs the robber. Death returns
To every one his own.

You supped on flies and worms, my trout ;
For all my pity I shall sup on thee ;
And death shall but work even justice out
When worms shall sup on me.

THE BUMBLE-BEE.

BUZZING little busy-body !
Happy little hay-field rover !
Don't you feel your own importance,
Bustling through these wilds of clover ?

Don't your little wings grow weary
Of this never-ceasing labor ?
When the butterfly swings near you,
Envy you your idle neighbor ?

Stay a moment—stay and tell me !
Won't my gossip make you tarry ?
Hurry home, then, honey-laden,
Fast as busy wings can carry.

Fare thee well, my tiny toiler,
Noisy little mid-air steamer !
Thou hast taught a wholesome lesson
To an idle daylight dreamer.

Lying here among the blossoms,
 While the dusky night advances,
 With her shadowy battalions
 Driving back day's golden lances,

I have dreamed of great achievements
 In the future's glorious hours ;
 But you teach me to make honey
 From the sweets of present flowers.

STRAWBERRIES, GROWING UPON GRAVES.

SHALL I refuse thy largess, little vine,
 Because thy hungry roots feed on my dead,
 Sucking from bloodless lips the blood-like wine
 That dyes thy berries red ?

Nay, all the happy, living things I see
 Are of the substance of dead things that were ;
 The heart that loved me once sends up to me
 Remembrancers of her.

Feed me to-day ; grudge not my dainty fare.
 I am no beggar asking alms of thee,
 One moment I enjoy thy berries rare ;—
 Thou shalt feast long on me.

FAILURE.

COME, John, sit down by me ; it frets my soul
To see you walking up and down the room ;
The thud of your slow feet is like the fall
Of clods into a grave. I cannot bear
To see that head, that never stooped before,
Bowed on your breast in silent agony,—
It maddens me,—for well I know you feel
The deep disgrace of rearing drunken sons
More than the grief of losing.

Come, sit down,

For all my mother instincts are awake,
And longings fierce, intense, and tigerish prove
All mothers—beasts or women—are alike.
I almost hate you for your pride. Your face
Is rigid and monotonous and dry
As some dry desert. Is there no remorse
Gnawing your heart-strings? does not sorrow thrumb
The tight-drawn strings of pain until your heart
Is numb with aching?

Oh, the glorious strength
Of manhood, that can find no room for grief
For very pride of heart! Oh, selfish men!
What do you know of woman's bliss and pain
More than of childbirth? In her twofold life
The mother learns a deeper mystery
Of pain and pleasure. In her child she lives,

And suffers, and is happy. She can feel
The joy- and grief-throbs of its little heart
In her responsive breast. The child is but
A little of herself. The good is hers,
And even the bad worst, her secret heart
Owns for its own and covers with a veil
Of palliation.

Oh, my wayward boy !
My erring lost one !

Yes, I will be calm.
Your voice could always calm me. Can you tell
How many years since you have held me thus
Close to your breast, my husband? Does it seem
So long since we were young? To me the past
Is but a yesterday. I could believe
It was last week that we sat talking thus
With our one boy,—your pride, my all in all,—
Crowing and tossing up his small, fat hands
In awkward baby-grace upon our laps.
Have you forgotten, John, that summer's night
When we were wondering what our boy would be
When he grew up? and how you proudly said
That some day Johnny should be President?
But I said I loved best to think him still
A little baby, nestling his small head
Close to my breast, and looking up to mine
With pleading eyes for comfort in his pain :
And then you laughed, and told me I would spoil
The boy with petting? Ah, John, who spoiled
most ?
You, with your noble sternness; sparing not
Your heart nor his to force him to grow up
Straight-trunked and fruitful like yourself; or I,

Twining my love about him, like a vine,
To hide his ragged branches with green leaves?
I know we both were wrong,—but you wrong
most,—

For you forgot that to the little shoot
God whispers how to grow; the husbandman
But loosens the firm soil, pulls out the weeds,
And gives its growth free way. You tried to raise
An oak from a young thorn; my woman's eyes
Softened its fibres with too many rains.

We could do better, John, if God had pleased
To trust us to train up another son.
Alas, we have none other! This was all.
This, that refused to walk in the straight road,
Rocky and flowerless, that you made for him,
But jumped the hedge and ran his own wild course
Among the snares and pitfalls; this, that brought
Shame to your head and sorrow to my heart;
That left our door that stormy winter night
With your grim benediction, and my prayers
Following his staggering steps; this, that came home
Only last night, with his young limbs all gnashed
And crunched by cruel car-wheels, was our all:
Our baby boy, that, some short years ago,
We tossed and kissed between us!

Oh, my God!

And shall I never see my boy again!
I cannot think of never; shall to-day
Succeed to yesterday, and yesterday
Glide backward to last year? The years grow old,
And each in passing leave a few gray hairs
And a new grief mark, till my head is white

And my face seamed and ugly? Shall my strength
Ooze out a grain a day, till my light step
Become a feeble hobble? Shall I still
Live on, and on, and on, and die at last
Of utter uselessness, and until death
Still yearn and yearn, and never see him once?
Oh, God, I cannot bear it!

Let me go!

You cannot comfort me with Scripture texts,
Nor make me say that it is better so.
I know he was a drunkard, and his life
One round of vice and crime. I know how small
The hope of his reform,—but he was mine.
Crime could not make of him a thing so low
But he could love his mother, and that love
Was more to me than goodness. Ah, who knows
How many times he may have longed to come
And lay his head upon her breast again,
And your cold looks prevented? Who can tell
What angel guided home his reeling steps
That awful night? Who knows what might have
been
But for your bitter words, that drove him back
To perish in the storm?

Nay, John, come back.

It is a fearful thing to see you weep.
Forgive my cruel words, for I am wild
With longing for my boy. You are the tower
That shelters me. I could not bear to have
You other than you are,—firm, rocky, strong;
But I am like a foolish mother-bird
Whose nest is empty. Bear with me awhile
Till I have grown acquainted with my grief

And learned to call it friend, and weep with it
In quiet hours alone.

 This dreadful hour
Brings us old age. I must give up my dreams
And you your high ambitions. Once again
We must be lovers, John, and so make smooth
The rocky hill of life whose steep descent
We must go down together. Kiss me, John.

I N S T E A D.

As the soft, twilight shadows fall,
Old faces rise, old voices call ;
And I, as they entreat me home,
Still sadly sigh,—I cannot come.

 Yet, while I long
 With you to be,
 Instead of me
Receive my song.

I cannot come,—yet this sweet strain
Wafts my rapt spirit home again,
And, as its mellow notes you hear,
Oh, think I sing it in your ear.

 And while I long
 With you to be,
 Instead of me
Receive my song.

Still do the golden days go by,
The flowers fade, the roses die ;
And, ere the last shall withered be,
Dear friends at home shall welcome me.

But while I long
With you to be,
Instead of me
Receive my song.

SING TO ME, DEAREST.

My heart it is heavy with bodings of sorrow ;
Mine eyes are just ready to brim full of tears ;
Dark, dark looks to-day, and still darker to-morrow ;
Then sing to me, dearest, and scatter my fears.

What charm like thy voice with its sinking and swelling ?
It rises and falls like the wind in a tree.
Unbidden by thee thy heart's deep secrets telling,
And breathing thy love and affection for me.

Sing to me, dearest. What care I for sorrow
While thou liest here with thy head on my breast ?
Thy sweet voice enchants me, and veils the dark morrow,
Then sing to me, dearest, the song I love best.

JEALOUSY.

Love me not a little ;
 I will share with none.
 Love me, if you love me,
 As earth loves the sun,

Unto whom she ever
 Turns a happy face,
 Glad of his warm kisses,
 Proud of his embrace.

As the dew-dank roses
 For the daybreak yearn,
 So, when I am absent,
 Long for my return.

As glad birds at sunrise
 Sing unconsciously,
 Let thy heart sing softly
 When I come to thee.

As flowers brighten dewdrops,
 Dewdrops sweeten flowers,
 Let our hours together
 Be our sweetest hours.

Love me not a little ;
 Give me all or none.
 If you love me, love me
 As earth loves the sun.

TIRED.

O, DEAR mother earth, let me lie on thy breast !
I come, a tired child, to thy bosom for rest.
Oh, fondly caress me ! speak low in mine ear !
Undress my pure soul from the world's tattered wear !

O, kiss me, my mother ! with tenderest airs ;
Wake love in my heart with small motherly cares ;
Wrap thy grasses about me, forbid me to rise
With a look full of love from thy sweet flower-eyes.

O, love me, my mother ! and show me thy love.
My soul is a lonesome, companionless dove.
The past hath its shadow, the future its shine,
But in the cold present thou only art mine.

I am tired—so tired ! Oh, sing me to sleep !
Hush thy winds, that my slumber be peaceful and deep.
Wake me softly with tears when the daylight is gone,
But, if I wake not,—mother, let me sleep on.

DROUGHT.

OUR thirsty valley looks up to the sky
For clouds in vain ;
Her sun-singed fields, brown, dead, and dusty lie
Parching for rain.

Her throat is choked with dust ; her drinking rills
Are dead of thirst.
No moisture trickles from the sweltering hills ;
The land seems curst.

The red-breast's wings are long unwashed, and gruff
Is his sweet note ;
There's scarcely water in the brook enough
To wet his throat.

O God, who hast the oceans to command,
Hear us complain !
How little, dripping from Thy hollowed hand,
Would be a rain ?

BEFORE WAKING.

OH, fold the hands ! Let my tired soul confer
A little longer with this restful dream.
About to break sleep's padded chain I seem ;
About, yet still a willing prisoner.

Thus let me lie and feel unconsciousness.
Asleep and resting ; knowing it is so,
But feeling not the still breath come and go ;
My trance unstirred by thought and laborless.

Knowing my blessedness, but naught beside ;
Feeling forgetfulness of pain and care ;

No more but this ; of all else unaware ;
Willing my soul should ever thus abide.

Long let my spirit this soft pleasure keep.
Break thou not in on my contented calm ;
While, in delicious mazes lost, I am
But wake enough to know I am asleep.

MY CREED.

EXCEEDING simple is my creed ;
Faith in one truth is all I need.
I rest my soul in perfect trust
That One is infinite and just,
And, sure that He all things ordained,
Fret not to have His ways explained,
Yet feel, as darkly now I read,
My knowledge growing with my need.
I seek not, hope not, to secure
Truth in one crystal, large and pure,
But grope in error's sandy sea
For scattered grains of verity.

The voice of many Priests is heard
Proclaiming, " Here is God's true word !"
One cries, " Behold a Book !" and one,
" Behold the skies ! peruse the sun !
Read earth's clear page of ancient rock,
Written by death, and earthquake shock,
And graving glacier !" while a third
Cries, " All in vain you seek God's word

With eyes of flesh ! Go thou apart,—
His oracle is thine own heart !”

I hold ye all for prophets. Read
To me your rocks, I will take heed ;
Read me your starry page, declare
The truth which God hath written there ;
Read me your book, I will not prize
Its pure truths less than rocks, or skies ;
At my heart’s portal I mine ear
Will place, and ponder what I hear
(But with good heed, for who can tell
What priest usurps the oracle ?),
Truth’s precious ore I will desire
Reason to purge with her keen fire,
And what her stamp approves shall be
Alone the Word of God to me.

Thus seeking knowledge from all men,
I own some things beyond my ken,
And whence I came, or whither go,
No Prophet tells, no Priest doth know.
Whether some essence of this “ I ”
Live on unchanged eternally ;
This spark of life one being warm,
Or, spread through beings multiform,
These conscious atoms shall but pass
Into the flowers, the trees, the grass,
Even as this warm blood shall impart
Its color to the rose’s heart,
I know not. But my faith is strong
That God cannot ordain a wrong,
And, for those things I cannot see,
I trust His wisdom fearlessly.

SUNRISE.

OH, draw me up, thou strong, aspiring sun !
I feel the tension of thy ropes of light,
And thy strong hand uplifting me. Farewell,
O earth, my mother ! To thy clammy breast,
Prest close with hungry and devouring love,
Long thou hast held me, now thy mighty lord—
My father—claims me, and my ardent soul
Is old enough to go. My spirit longs
To see what lies above the mountain-tops.

Yet I have loved thee, mother earth, and lain
Happy and dreaming in thy wide, green lap,
Lulled by thy cradle-songs of brooks and winds ;
Thy breast hath fed me, and thy love made glad.
I bless and love thee, mother, for thy love !
Yet it is fearful,—hungry-fierce it is,—
For thou art jealous of the winking stars
That bring me thought-flowers from the world of space
And hide me from them with thy veil of clouds.
I may not dip the pinions of my soul
In yon blue ether, for thy watchful eye
Divines my thought, and thou, with swift embrace,
Dost fetter me with kisses, crying, “ Child,
Mine art thou,—mine ! Wander not far away ;
Frolic and chase my butterflies awhile,
Then come to me for rest, and I will hide
Thee, slumbering, in my bosom, where no eye—
Not thy strong father’s—shall behold thee more.”

O SUN ! There is a passion fierce and strong,
Outblazing love as thou dost earth's cold fires ;
It burns within my soul when I look up
And know thou art my father. Though the earth
Conceived me and brought forth, thou didst give life
To the void germ within her. I am thine.
Thy fire is in my breast. My high-born soul
Chafes at the mother's tether. It was hers
To suckle my blind infancy, 'tis thine
To teach my youth in things beyond her ken.

Arise, strong father ! Luminously smile,
And burn away earth's sulky fogs and damps.
Leave her my swaddling-clothes to kiss and keep
In her cold bosom, wet with rainy tears,
But lift my spirit on thy radiant wing,
And, in the vast star-multitudes of space,
Teach me male wisdom, and sublimer things
Than earth could hear unquaked. Fill me with light
From quenchless fountains. Teach me too to shine.

CORNPLANTER.

(THE LAST WAR-CHIEF OF THE SENECA.)

THE greatest hero is not he whose trump
Is loudest blown by fame ;
As deep woods hide the fallen Tree-king's stump,
Oblivion hides the name

Of many a brave truth miner, who hath wrought
Darkling, and made no stir.
Men wear the precious jewels of his thought,
And ask not whose they were.

This red man's life was luminous and bright
In dark obscurity,
Like a grand forest fire, whose splendid light
Only brute creatures see.

Fame's bloody war-crown bravely he declined.
In sight of glory's throne
The wild heart bowed to the heroic mind,
And dared to die unknown.

Hate's fire consumed his heart ; oppression fanned
And kept its flame alive.
The war-whoop trembled on his lip, his hand
Grasped the keen scalping-knife ;

But ever present with him day and night
Was wisdom's marble face :
" Be patient and plant corn," she said, " or light
The death-fire of your race."

He lit the peace-pipe, though for blood athirst,
And saw, like smoke in air,
His glory fade. The once loved chief was curst
By Turtle, Wolf, and Bear.

Wise lookers back, who see but their own trail,
Despise the eagle's sight :
" See," cried the braves, " the coward's cheek is pale !
The war-chief's heart is white."

He heard, and on their pigmy heads looked down,—
A pine-tree midst the corn ;—
With their rash blood he might have bought renown,
And worship had, for scorn ;

But, strangling his own heart, that fiercely cried,
He sought his people's good,
And taught them how to drift along the tide
Which might not be withstood.

Peaceful and calm, only his flashing eye
Told what sublime restraint
Choked down a longing, savage-wild, to die
A warrior in war-paint.

O, grand old savage ! not thy clan alone
May count thy life for gain ;
Through thy spent strength the world is stronger grown :
Thy years were not in vain.

Full many a hero, dying for a name,
Hath missed of his renown ;
Haply to thee, that turned thy back on fame,
She yet may bring a crown.

SNOW.

In the sky a great bird hovers,
With wide wings o'er vale and hill.
Her white breast she plucks, and shakes
Downward flocks of feathery flakes,

Till the cold, damp earth she covers,
And her own bare breast is chill.
Lapt in down the earth doth lie,—
Let the cloud bird freeze and die.

O'er the cold world, in his tower,
Lone the poet sits and sings:
All the world, his song to hear,
Pauses rapt with drinking ear.
Ah, sweet harp! for thy rare power
The singer's heart hath given its strings.
Sweet his music, but not long:
He sings his life into his song.

POET AND LILY.

A POET gazed with longing eyes
Into a rich man's paradise,—
A bower of bloom where fountains danced,
And rare birds sang and sunbeams glanced.
In fountain dew and sunbeam showers
Grew tropic plants and warm-breathed flowers,
Which, in that finely-tempered air,
Forgot they were not native there.

Set in the midst—a virgin queen—
A wondrous lily stood serene.
Pure white, on every flower's head
She seemed its lovely hues to shed,

As from the milk-white moon there falls
A rainbow 'gainst heaven's misty walls.

The poet sighed : " O lily fair !
I need thee in my garret bare.
How quickly would my fortunes mend
Had I but thee to watch and tend !
Thy pure white face would be to me
A well-spring of sweet poesie ;
Thy beauty would inspire my string
That men should pause to hear me sing,
And, seeing thee, shed happy tears,
Stung with delight through eyes and ears.
No want, no care to me were known,
For, having eyes for thee alone,
Desire should die, all love grow cool
Save for my one thing beautiful.
I consecrate my life to thee ;
Come, queen of flowers, and dwell with me ! "

Was it the breeze moved through the bed ?
Or did the lily lift her head ?
Was it the breeze the poet heard
Low whispering like a dreaming bird ?
Or did the lily languid, slow,
Thus answer ? " Poet, be it so,—
I could bring joy to you, yet I
In your dull cage would droop and die.
On love-songs lilies cannot live,
And you have nothing else to give. "

Oh, lily of my love ! in gloom
I sit and long for thy perfume,
Yet dare not sue to thee, sweet flower,
Till I can give thee bower for bower.

• HEINE.

(BUCH DER LIEDER.)

PAIN brings us more than pleasure ;
Tears comfort more than wine ;
Grief's hands are full of treasure,
And sorrow is divine.

The nightingale that's making
Night happy with his strain,
His little heart is breaking :
He sings to still its pain.

Better than laughing folly,
Gay songs and wassail ale,
Thy tuneful melancholy,
O poet nightingale !

I have no ear for gladness
When thou, with song, dost make
Such rapture out of sadness—
Such transport of heart-break.

CHURCH-BELLS.

CALL not, sweet church-bells, from the town !

My breezy hill I will not leave,
Nor to your gothic caves come down.

Ye are but sirens that deceive.

Your wizard master well I know.

How often, by his baleful spells,
Into a creature vile and low
Have I been changed, O siren bells !

Ah me ! how totally depraved,—

Wickedly marring God's good plan !—
How justly damned, how hardly saved,
The wretch his black art makes of man !

A purer spell enchants me here

And lifts my spirit from the dust.
The lusty growth of the young year
Brings nobler hope and grander trust.

My cousins of the earth and air—

Contented trees and cheerful birds—
With me their simple wisdom share,
And preach rare sermons without words.

Sir Woodpecker, true knight and good,

Guards from small foes the helpful tree
That holds his mate and her young brood
High hid in green security.

The flowers are quickened by the breast
Of the rude robber honey-bee ;
The bird that mourns an empty nest
Sings sorrow into ecstasy.

Oh green and living things of earth !
Oh living, loving things of air !
My soul is but a later birth ;
One life, one heritage we share.

The faith of trees, so calm and strong,
Hath in my soul its counterpart ;
The passion of the rapt bird's song
Wakes a wild echo in my heart.

Who shall declare us great and small,
Or judge our lives for good or ill ?
One thought of God hath made us all ;
All life is but His moving will.

MOONRISE.

I.

As from our hill-top we look west,
One blush of cloudlet lies amid cloud-snows,
Where Day, on pensive Evening's peaceful breast,
Hath dropped a parting rose.

II.

Look downward, sweetheart ; see how still,
How breathless now the dusky valley seems !
As if it caught, from yonder brooky hill,
The voice of singing streams.

III.

Earth fades apace, but, ere 'tis lost,
A warrior star burns through the sky, and soon
Around his standard troops a glittering host
To overawe the moon.

IV.

See where, above the hill, serene,
White as new snow, she tranquilly appears.
'The haughty stars grow meek before their queen
And droop their golden spears.

V.

So, even at their fiery noon,
Ambition's stars, that light my life's wild skies,
Do worship and fall down, when, like the moon,
Thy image there doth rise.

THE WALK.

I STROLLED abroad to breathe the freshened air.
For months a frigid barrier had pent up
Within close limits my unquiet soul,
And, when the early spring began to smile,

How gladly did I hail her genial warmth,
Her balmy breath, and melody of sounds !
I hailed her as my sweet deliverer
From winter's gloomy prison, and gave up
My heart to fullest blissfulness and peace.

'Twas earliest spring ; the pallid snow-drifts clung
Tenaciously, as if for life, around
The brown and barren summits of the hills.
There was no green upon the earth as yet,
No single spear of grass, no starting leaf ;
But from the heavens the sun sent down his beams
With promises of life, and seemed to say,
“ A little, and before my showers of heat
Yonder white snow shall melt and slink away ;
My rays shall penetrate the dormant sod
And wake its latent germs from their long sleep ;
The earth shall soon be carpeted with green ;
The forest hung with leafy draperies ;
And in sequestered nooks and sylvan dells
The violet shall ope its modest eye,
And drink in light and life with thankfulness.”

Sparkling like silver in the sun's warm beams
The joyful river danced and tumbled on
Drinking up sunlight, as if long athirst.
Its waves at play, like children after school,
Chasing each other with low, gurgling laugh,
And leaping up to catch the straggling beams
Of mellow sunlight as they hurried by ;
Tossing themselves against the shaded bank
To tell it they were warm, and it was spring.

With gladdened heart I climbed the southern slope
Of the great hill, and, when far up its side,
I sat me down upon a massive stone
To view the scene below.

A pleasant plain
Lay at my feet, whereon the village stood,
A cluster of white cottages and spires ;
Beyond, the hills rose brown and sombre, capped
And patched along their sides with spots of snow ;
Soft silver clouds sailed o'er the azure sky,
And through the middle of the level plain
The river rolled rejoicingly along.
Oh ! it was sweet to feel the gentle Spring
Balmily breathing 'gainst my cheek once more ;
To hear the robin, from a leafless bough,
Chirp his delight at her desired return ;
And thus to bask me in the warming sun,
And listen to the varied sounds that burst,
In heaven-tuned concord, from the happy heart
Of Nature, that had lain so long asleep.

Then long I sat, and yielded up my soul
Unto the softening influence of the time ;
And dreamed I saw old Winter, with his locks
Of silver fluttering in the buoyant air,
Shake hands with blooming Spring, and place his crown
Of sovereignty upon her youthful brow ;
Then, turning sadly from his empire lost,
Wend o'er the northern hills his lingering way
And vanish in a bank of fleecy clouds.

And then I turned with thankful heart to HIM
Whose love hath fashioned this delightful globe,

Warmed it, and lighted it with yonder sun,
Piled those white clouds against the blue expanse,
And sent the seasons on their ceaseless round,
To make His children an abiding-place.

WHY?

(SUGGESTED BY THE EARLY DEATH OF E. F. M.)

O PREACHER ! search your books and give
To our sad hearts a reason why.
Why should the old and wretched live ?
Why must the young and happy die ?

The hawk that kills but never sings,
By murder waxes bold and strong,
Feeding the vigor of his wings
On many a 'fenceless bird of song.

The world is overfull of drones,
And brutes shaped like humanity ;
The air is sick with wretches' groans ;
But these, O death ! are naught to thee.

But she, whose days were happy ; she,
Whose soul, like some woods-waterfall,
Poured out its joyous music free
And made life sweeter for us all ;

She, whose sublime humility
Taught us how great are common things ;
Whose life was like a symphony
Low sung by tender flutes and strings,—

She is thy victim. Wretchedness
Courts death and lives, but she must die.
O preacher ! close your books ; confess
You do not know the reason why.

Stars fill all space as thick as sands
Blown round by gusts that herald rain,
And all our race hath room and lands
Upon a single whirling grain.

How shall mites measure miles ? and we
Are mites to nature's miles. What rod
Have we to scale eternity,
Or measure the designs of God ?

Mysterious Source of Life, divine !
How should Thy ways to us be known ?
The clue to life and death is Thine.
Thou knowest why, and Thou alone.

MOONLIGHT.

(A REVERIE.)

OVER the hills the moonlight steals,
And floods the level meadows ;
The river, drowned in light, reveals
A world of sleeping shadows.

Smoothed are its ripples, hushed the sighs
With which all day 'tis teeming ;
Beneath the misty, moonlit skies
It lies as if a-dreaming—

Dreaming of softly slipping on
Through woodlands cool and stilly ;
Of quarrelling with rock and stone ;
Of kissing the sweet lily ;

Of brattling shallows, gay cascades,
Clear crystal springs and fountains,
And birds that charm in quiet shades
Its birthplace in the mountains.

And, as I gaze out on the night,
My thoughts, with sweet delaying,
By devious paths of shade and light
Through memory's groves are straying.

Dim ghosts of buried yesterdays,
Crowned with hope's withered flowers,

Lead up and down these silent ways
Their spectral trains of hours.

Dead loves and griefs, that long have lain
Beneath the past's deep ocean,
Rise—live—and fill my soul again
With passionate emotion.

My heart cries out,—dull, heavy pain
Lies leaden on its pulses,
E'en while its inmost depths a strain
Of blissful notes convulses.

Ah! sweet indeed it is to me
To sit thus idly musing;
Letting fond Fancy wander free
By paths of her own choosing.

And though midst saddest scenes she roam,
And o'er my senses creeping
I feel a melancholy come,
And catch myself a-weeping,

I feel a blissfulness so rare,
So pure, unworldly, holy,
I love to breathe the saddened air
Of dreamy melancholy.

And, as the moonbeams softly sleep
On hill and dale and river,
I love the dream that makes me weep,
And covet it forever.

LOCUST-BLOSSOMS.

SWEET scents are mingled with the air
That comes to fan my cheek to-night ;
A perfume subtle, honeyed, rare,
That fills me with a calm delight,

As down the dim, twilighted street
I loiter, dreaming as I go,
Plucking the locust blossoms sweet
That droop in modest grace full low.

O memory ! with gentle hand
Opening afresh my half-healed wound ;
O locust-trees ! I see *her* stand,
With your white, creamy clusters crowned,

Within the doorway clambered o'er
By spice-breathed roses red and white,
While fast from heaven night's angels pour
The moon of harvest's mellow light.

A picture sweetly set in flowers,
And sweet itself beyond compare.
'Tis a vain thing to weep for hours
And loves long vanished into air ;

But back upon my soul again,
Borne on this perfume-laden breeze,
Old memories fall like autumn rain,
And drown me in sweet miseries.

Oh, your strange perfume pains with sweet !

Yet, locust-trees, I love the pain,
And, sitting at your gnarled feet,
I call my dead past back again.

Its loves, its hates, its hopes, its fears,
Its wild commotion, peaceful rest,—
Some love has hallowed e'en its tears,
And rendered every sorrow blest.

F A I T H.

SOME truths, which we hold dear as life,
We only know by faith ; and so
I know, but know not how I know,
That, one day, you will be my wife.

You turn your eyes away in vain.
Those eyes, that read my inmost soul,
The might of love shall yet control,
And make to beam on me again.

Shrined in my heart your image stands,
Not draped as lost,—a memory—
But lonely beautiful, as she
That brings my future in her hands.

Bright Hope to me her songs doth sing,
And Faith's wide eyes speak more than words.
In faith I wait, as snow-caught birds
Wait the sure coming of the spring.

THE SCHOOL-HOUSE.

YES, John, our district well may brag
On this new school-house. I brag too.
I'm for improvement. I don't lag
Behind when things want putting through.

But that old, battered, wooden shell
That stood on this spot fifty year,—
I'd learned to know its face so well
That somehow—— John, it's mighty queer,

But when you pulled the old house down,—
The time this new one was begun,—
I had to go to lower town :
I couldn't stand to see it done.

For there I studied A, B, C,
Got licked, and learned, by hook and crook,
To read about the apple-tree
In Webster's old blue spelling-book.

And, where that church stands, many a morn
(Twas a field then)—a love-sick fool—
I stood behind a shock of corn
To see the school-ma'am come to school.

Her cheeks, as she the cornfield crost,
Were redder than the scrub-oak leaves ;
Her eyes were brighter than the frost
That sparkled on the tasselled sheaves.

And in among the noisy throng
Of barefoot youngsters she would go,—
And, as I watched her, I allowed
It wasn't strange they loved her so.

But when, just at the school-house door,
Each urchin claimed his kiss, ah ! then
I longed to go barefoot once more,
And read the spelling-book again.

Sweet Lucy ! How it came to pass
I can't explain,—but, any way,
I might as well have joined a class,
For I hung round there half the day.

At noon I'd take her nuts, a pear,
Or apples,—my best grafted fruit,—
To trade for smiles ; she traded fair,
And gave me many thanks to boot.

And sometimes, after study hours,
When Lucy led her merry throng
Into the woods for late wild-flowers
And autumn leaves, I'd go along.

She had some dozen boys, half grown,
That loved her well. They shamed me, though,
For I loved too, and I alone
Had not the pluck to tell her so.

“ You happy boys ! ” I thought, “ you swap
Wild-flowers for kisses from her lips :
I'd harvest the whole flower crop
To kiss her very finger-tips.”

But winter came, and when the ground
And the big hills with snow were white,
I'd hitch my colt up and go round
To take her home from school at night.

One frosty evening, riding slow
Through Johnson's woods, her rosy cheek
Lay close to mine and thrilled me so
That I determined I would speak.

"Lucy!" I said, "dear Lucy!"—Here
Her eyes met mine and flustered me.
As awkward as a yearling steer
I backed and tried again. "You see—

"I want to ask you"—a big lump
Came in my throat—"Whoa, Bill, you fool!
That's nothing but a hemlock stump!—
If—if you love—the boys in school."

'Twant what I meant; but, any way,
She dropped her eyes, and I could see
She guessed what I had tried to say.
She said, "Of course. They all love me."

Boldened by this, her hand I prest,
And cried, "Dear Lucy, couldn't you
Love me a little with the rest?
For I—I love the school-ma'am too."

See, yonder comes my school-ma'am wife;
Her cheeks are fresh and rosy yet;
And, for our happy married life,
We bless this spot where first we met.

VOICES OF THE FOREST.

IN the dim forest alone I wandered one day in the
autumn,
Late in the chill afternoon as the sun slowly sank to
the westward.
Silently, wrapt in strange fancies, beneath the dark
plumes of the hemlocks,
Listening the songs of the birds and their chaffering,
queer conversation,
As they rustled among the dark boughs in the hush of
the twilighted forest,
I walked ankle-deep in crisp leaves: walked on, all
unconscious of whither,
Till, suddenly, from a low hill-top, I saw the last glories
of sunset,—
The pomp of the king of the day, departing in splendor
thrice regal.
Slowly the huge golden gates of the west were swung
widely asunder ;
Slowly the song of the birds sank away in low, tremulous
quavers ;
Burst the great heart of the breeze in one sad sob of
sorrow, then, silent,
Drooping, and motionless standing, the tall pines la-
mented their lover.
Soon, as in transport I stood, I heard a faint rustle of
pinions,
Felt a slight stir, as of wings, and the awe of a wonderful
Presence.

Straightway a voice like a flute, with musical, low
modulations,
Inwardly borne to my soul, sang sweetly unto it in this
wise :

Poet dumb and deaf and blind,
I will be thy mother kind ;
I will make thee hear and see
Nature's wondrous mystery.
Till thy heart shall me forsake
It shall know the sweetest ache ;
Till vain noises fill thine ear
Thou shalt all my songsters hear ;
Till gilt baubles catch thine eye
Thou shalt all my secrets spy ;
I will make thy mute lips sing
Like the happy birds in spring.

Then once again a soft sound like the waving of wind-
shaken branches,—
Vanished the Presence away,—and the breeze rushed
again through the tree-tops,
Kissed the disconsolate pines that lifted their heads to
receive him,
Clasped in his arms the dark hemlocks, and tilted their
plumes on his fingers.
Each several tree had a language,—the breeze told my
heart his sweet story ;
The brook sang a song of her own to the rocks as she
brabbled beneath them ;
In empty nests sat mother-birds, and mournfully chirped
of their nestlings
Grown up and gone their own ways. The sky was fast
paling to grayness,

But still in the west lived a flush, as if in the train of
the day king
Some lagging retainers remained to close up the gate-
way behind him.

I stopped by the trunk of an oak,—a stalwart and
rough-coated giant,—
Tree-king of all the great forest, and proud of his
strength and his kingship.
Eagerly waving his arms, as if to embrace the wild
north wind,
Thus, as I fancied, he sang to the north his proud song
of defiance :

THE ROYAL OAK.

Blow, blow your worst, O winter wind !
Come, pinching frost and freezing cold !
Come, try my strength, and you shall find
I am not weak, though I am old.
I laugh at your howling, ha ! ha ! ha !
I laugh at the cold and threatening sky ;
I rail at the winter, ha ! ha ! ha !
For a royal oak am I.

Come, wrestle with me, O boasting storm !
I do not fear your ice and snow ;
'Twill make me a coat to keep me warm,
And I love you the best when wildest you blow.
I laugh at your boasting, ha ! ha ! ha !
Come, strong north wind, my old arms try ;
I love the wild winter, ha ! ha ! ha !
For a royal oak am I.

Poor, puny aspen ! I pity you :

You will shiver and shrink when the wild winds come.

Young spruce will be covered with cold snow, too,

And stand like a statue, frozen dumb.

But I laugh at the winter, ha ! ha ! ha !

An hundred such I have seen go by :

I fear not his bluster, ha ! ha ! ha !

For a royal oak am I.

Close by the monarch there stood another oak, old
and decaying,—

Father, perhaps, of the king who so proudly defied the
hard weather.

Painfully swayed by the wind, his branches creaked
sharply in moving,

For age had long stolen his strength,—his pride was
forgotten in sorrow :

Hearing this song of defiance, he sighed, drooped still
lower his branches,

And chanted a strain of foreboding that fell on my
ear like a death-song

Sung by a silver-haired chief, with the bright eyes of
Pauguk upon him.

THE OLD OAK.

The winter comes apace ; ah, me !

What shall I do, what shall I do ?

Cold snow will pile against my knee,—

I shall be frozen through and through ;

The ruffian wind will buffet me ;

The cruel hail will pelt me, too,

What shall I do, what shall I do ?

Once I could rail at storms,—but now,—
I am so old, I am so old,
I cannot bare my withered brow
And laugh at hail and snow and cold.
Will not the winter pity me
When all my years he shall be told?
I am so old, I am so old!

He has no pity well I wist,
And I have taunted him of yore;
He'll gripe me in his giant fist
And rack my weary limbs full sore;
When spring shall come I shall be missed,
For I, when spring her rains shall pour,
Shall be no more, shall be no more.

Tumbling o'er mossy rocks, and sliding o'er gravelly
reaches,
Plunging from shade into light, and slipping from
sunlight to shadow,
Laughingly sang the gay brook,—the wayward coquette
of the forest.

THE BROOK.

I am a wild, free nursling of the forest wild and free,
I sing from morn to even in a happy, blithesome key;
I sing from morn to even, and from even unto morn,
And keep tryst with wooing starlets ere the crescent
moon is born.

My banks love well to listen as I babble and I sing;
I charm the dust-winged butterflies above me as they
swing;

I flirt with love-lorn willow-trees, that droop their heads
full low

To catch my farewell murmur as so gayly on I flow.

I tumble over mossy rocks, I woo the flowers with
kisses ;

I spatter the great booby trees ; I dash down precipices.

I linger long in sunny spots and lose myself in dreaming ;

I shoot into the laurel shade and don a careless seeming ;

Slowly I slide o'er sandy beds, 'twixt stretching fields
and meadows ;

Quickly I glance o'er pebbly ways to reach the wooing
shadows ;

Where'er I go, whate'er I do, I heed no coming trouble ;
Enough for me I now can sing, and murmur, flirt, and
bubble.

Deep in a nook of the woods, half hidden in shadows
of twilight,

Stood, with her lithe branches drooping, a leafless,
disconsolate rosebush.

Strewing the earth at her feet lay all that was left of
the roses

Born to her husband, the sun, in the happy young days
of the summer.

Ever her branches were swayed by a zephyr that sought
to console her ;

Ever she groped with blind hands, as if seeking to
touch her dead children ;

Heedless of comforting airs, and moaning in piteous
cadence,
She sang a sad dirge for her dead, that made my heart
ache as I listened.

THE ROSEBUSH.

My roses fair are dead, all dead ;
Here, scattered on the earth they lie :
My wealth is gone, my glory fled,—
Left bare and barren let me die.

How joyfully, in early spring,
When first the singing birds were here,
I felt my pulses quickening,
And saw the tender buds appear !

How blissfully, when first 'gan peep
Faint blushes from the buds' embrace,
I rocked them in my arms asleep,
With sunlight smiling in my face !

How proud was I when they were grown !
Ah, those delicious summer days !
The south wind kissed them one by one,
And they blushed redder at his praise.

Their gentle fame spread far and wide,
That birds and breezes came to woo
In amorous crowds at eventide,
And sang and whispered in the dew.

At last, e'en from the frigid zone
(My daughters' fame had spread so far),

An unknown suitor came alone,
At night, beneath the polar star.

And he was clad in silver sheen,
All in a glittering coat of mail.
My daughters naught so fair had seen,
And listened, wondering, to his tale.

Alas, those dazzling bride-robés bright !
Alas, for joys that will not stay !
Who kissed their happy leaves at night,
With morning sunlight stole away.

And saucy sunbeams laughed in scorn,
Till hung my daughters' heads with shame :
Stripped of the robes so briefly worn
They drooped,—and then *my* sorrow came.

For, hour by hour, my daughters fair,
I watched them pine away in grief ;
Pale grew they each in mute despair,
And I could offer no relief.

Then, one by one, they dropped away,—
The saddest thing to feel and see,—
Till, on this sad autumnal day,
No single rose is left to me.

My roses fair are dead, are dead,
All scattered at my feet they lie ;
My joy is gone, my comfort fled,
My hopes are withered,—let me die.

Pitying zephyr that listened sought, when she paused,
to console her,
Singing a song full of hope, and dwelling upon the
bright future.

THE ZEPHYR.

We sadly mourn our dead ;—yet why,
Since life but teaches us to die ?
Calm faith forbids our souls to sigh,
And weep the precious hours away.
Death is a night of dreamless sleep,
The tranquillest of slumbers deep ;
The dead weep not, why should we weep,
That soon shall rest as soft as they ?

Quick life is born of dull decay ;
Night travails with the birth of day ;
God's creatures all shall live away,
Though death their atoms re-arrange.
Though frost hath killed thy roses fair
And left thy fond arms thin and bare,
Bright spring the ravage shall repair
With roses sweeter for the change.

Still in the forest I lingered,—the charm was too strong
for swift breaking :
Leaning against a tall pine I closed my eyes softly and
listened.
The sweet, single voices were hushed, but, like the calm
thunder of organs,
Breaking the waves of the air into billows of rapturous
music,

Came the great voice of the forest, in harmonies set by
the Master,
Chanting His own hymn of praise. In my soul all
those passionate harp-strings
That vibrate but speak not were swept by invisible
hands, till they quivered
And ached with an agonized effort to voice the grand
music of silence.
Wildly and vainly I longed to know the unknowable
secret,
And tell of unspeakable things. But soon the grand
voice of the forest
Brought me its own sublime calm, and seemed like the
voice of a mother.
Then my soul took up the psalm in wonder and awful
thanksgiving.

HYMN.

Infinite, Unknowable, Unknown !
Thou, God, whom we not understand
And therefore worship, Thou hast shown
To us Thy works, but not Thine hand.

Of Thee all creatures talk, yet tell
Their story and not Thine. We know
The mute, wise speech of Nature well ;
She leads our steps, that stumble slow

Far through the dim, mysterious past,—
Whose tale she dumbly doth rehearse,—
Unto an awful, shapeless Vast
That travails with the universe.

Father of suns ! first-born of things !
With horrid labor, in our sight
Thou bringest forth in fiery rings
The monarchs of the day and night.

Through mists of atoms, nebulous,
We grope to Darkness—awful Space,
Yet ONE is still unseen of us,—
Primeval darkness veils His face.

O God ! I know not what Thou art,
But, in the stillness of this wood,
No doubt disturbs my tranquil heart ;
I know that Thou art wise and good.

All things do glorify Thy name
With songs, sweet scents, and happy ways ;
My soul mounts upward like a flame,
Blown by the rushing wind of praise.

On this deep harmony of calm
I may not jar with one loud word,
But let me join the holy psalm
With mute heart-music, only heard

By Thee, great Master, whose wide ear
Earth's harsh, discordant miseries
And life's unuttered woes dost hear
Attuned to heavenly harmonies.

In Thy rich peace all longing dies ;
Joy floods all vain desires back ;
Yet, like the flowers, with upturned eyes
I pray, though conscious of no lack.

Give me some length of such calm days,
And flower-lapped slumber at the close,
That I, through Thy mysterious ways,
May live again in some sweet rose.

LAWYER AND POET.

O RARE battalion of buff-jerkined knights,
That on my shelves huddle like sheep together !
Heroes of dusty fields and wordy fights !
Proudly you wear your well-scarred coats of leather !

Right learned Thebans are ye ! well ye know it !
Dry as arithmetic and grave as Moses ;
You're genial comrades for a madcap poet
That loves the songs of birds and smell of posies !

Graybeard old tomes whose tilting days are done
(Of the pure common law the murky fountain),
Crabbed old Coke, that upon Littleton
Rid'st like an ugly Old Man of the Mountain,—

Saunders the dusty-mouthed, that lives on pleas,
And chip-dry Chitty, ye are lightsome fairies !
With Blackstone only can I take mine ease,
For he wrote rhymes as well as Commentaries.

And you, ye youngers, that fresh calf-skin wear !
New dressers of old dolls ! rag-patchwork makers !
Delvers in dust-heaps, spreading, with grand air,
Your fathers' learned ashes, yards o'er acres !

I tremble in your company, for fear
You'll dry up my heart's springs with your glum
faces,
So that I nevermore shall love to hear
The robin sing, nor see the early daisies.

So be it never. For my daily bread,
Knightlings, I'll march before you into battle ;
But, when the day is done, with unhelmed head
I'll walk the woods and hear the crickets rattle.

TWO THOUGHTS.

“LOVE cometh quickly like a shy young bird
That, frightened, flies for refuge to my breast,
His feathery bosom to my bosom prest,
His tiny wings now still, now terror-stirred :”
So said the bard. I would not have it so,
For, terror past, love's bird would quickly flee,
Lured by a thousand voices, leaving me
Birdless and loveless, sad that he should go.
Come love to me as a wind-sailing seed
And strand upon the garden of my heart,
There cling with tiny roots till green shoots start
And grow to lovely shrubs ; then let these breed
Plants like themselves, till all the ways and bowers
Are sweetened by the breath of many flowers.

TO A FRIEND ON HIS WEDDING-DAY.

If there do joys in heaven remain
More deep than mortals e'er have known ;
If there be blessings sweet as rain,
Or breath of flowers newly blown ;

If there be any blessed thing
Can fill the heart with rapture new,
My fervent strivings while I sing
Shall call it down to dwell with you.

How many miles, O long-time friend,
Divide us on thy wedding-day !
But love doth to the absent lend
Swift wings to cleave the blue delay ;

I'm with you ; I, an unseen guest,
Bring my small offering of bloom ;
I stand and wait till heaven hath blest
The kneeling, happy bride and groom.

And now rise up, no longer twain,
Rise up and bless the happy day ;
The glad wind pipes a merry strain,
The trees strew red leaves in your way.

The birds have sought a milder clime,—
All but a faithful few, who stay

Beyond their summer singing-time
To trill for you a roundelay.

The sky above is fretted fair
With white clouds piled against its blue :
Dame Nature claims a mother's share
In your delight, and smiles at you.

Speak not : the deepest thoughts are dumb,
And loving eyes are eloquent.
Permit no thought of grief to come
To mar the present, calm content.

Heed not the future. He is wise
Who hid it close behind a veil ;
All seasons have some smiling skies,
Some clattering storms of smiting hail ;

But love shall sing when sorrow lowers,
Love's hand sustain when tempests beat,
And strew life's path so deep with flowers
Its thorns shall hardly find your feet.

MORNING.

(A FRAGMENT.)

SWEETLY the smiling Prince of Day,
Slow sailing over seas of gray
Upon his golden boat, the sun,
Far off among the shadows dun,

Approaches in the eastern sky.
Anon, his scarlet pennons fly
In rosy undulations fair
Athwart the heavens bleak and bare.

His mother, night, in funeral boat
Upon the self-same sea afloat,
Awaits, as he comes on apace,
To fold him in one long embrace ;
Then drapes her sad robes o'er her breast,
And steers her pinnace slowly west.

The breeze, which all night long has sighed
Like one lamenting a lost bride
Who wanders up and down in grief,
Seeking in vain to find relief
In wild bemoaning of his loss,—
Now rippling o'er the unripe wheat,
Just touching earth with shining feet,
Comes flying the smooth fields across.

The flowers lift up their tearful eyes
And welcome him with glad surprise ;
The trees lift up their hands to bless,
And bow their heads in thankfulness ;
While in their tops the song-birds swing,
And morning smiles to hear them sing.

The river rolls its glistening waves
Beneath the silent hill of graves,
And sports in happy, playful mood,
With modest flowers that fringe the wood.
The hills, great guardian giants stand,
Protectors of the lowlier land,

One round, unbroken ring of green,
Save where the rivers wind between.

Oh ! it is sweet in summer's prime
To hear the bird's melodious rhyme ;
To see the flowers' dew-drowned heads ;
And watch the mounting sun, that sheds,
In mellow showers that slanting fall,
Its golden glory over all.

The earth is green, the sky is fair,
And cordial is the cool, fresh air,
That drinks the perfume of the flowers,
And from each tree rains crystal showers ;
Bright meadows, smiling fields, and river
All in a sparkling, glittering quiver ;
Between close hills that bound the view
Blue vistas vanishing in blue ;
The whole sweet earth beneath us spread,
And the fair firmament o'erhead
Seems fresh, and pure, and glad, and gay,
As if 'twere nature's holiday.

A SUMMER NIGHT.

A SLEEPING river, coiled among the hills
Like a huge serpent wrought in polished steel ;
A watching moon whose silver fount distils
Soft floods that earthward tremulously reel ;

Myriads of fire-flies, each with torch a-light,
Through the soft haze like little meteors gleam,
Their twinkling shadows nestling for the night
Close by fair starlets bosomed in the stream ;
All to my soul appeareth as a dream.
Our earth was never wont to be so fair,
Nor ever breathed so soft an evening air,
Nor came such perfume from earth's rarest flowers.
Sweetheart ! thy beauty fills this world of ours,
And Nature is more sweet for love of thee.

POESY.

LIKE a young bird of song in prison pent,
That spends its strength in struggling to be free,
Then folds its useless wings all wearily
And dreams of flights high as the firmament,
My prisoned soul in struggles vain had spent
Its little strength, and sunk in mute despair.
Sweet dreams came whispering of the realms of air,
But left new torture when their ways they went.
Then thou, O goddess ! came my bars within,
Flooding the darkness with celestial light,
Drowning despair in oceans of delight,
Sweeping sweet chords that silent aye had been,
And touching my dumb lips, that, opening,
I did forget my chains in joy that I could sing.

•

B U T.

IN the dusk of the evening the garden is sweet
With the breath and love-kisses of blossoms and
breeze.

I hear the low fountains like pattering feet,
And the drowsy good-nights of the birds in the
trees.

But without I must wait,
Bemoaning my fate ;
For a savage fierce mastiff lies guarding the gate.

The music of heaven—the voice and the harp—
Comes faint from the garden. The pink peach-trees
near

Shed their petals with rapture. My senses are sharp
With longing, yet only a measure I hear.

Nearer, nearer,—but see,
'Neath yon thorn-apple tree
Stands grim Father Moneybags frowning at me.

Ah, vision of beauty ! Sweet child of my dreams !

With voice of an angel and face of a sprite !

The blood in my veins leaps in passionate streams.

O twin of my soul, never known till to-night !

But evil betide

That fine knave at thy side,

Who scowls like a storm as I gaze at his bride.

WITHERED VIOLETS.

IN A LETTER FROM THE SOUTH.

DEAR, dead children of the spring !
Happy are the thoughts you bring.
Still about each faded mouth
Hangs the perfume of the south ;
Tells how sweet ye died, and blest,
Gently rocked on Hilda's breast.
Ah, ye thought not, dead, to be
Bearers of her thought to me !

Little flow'rs, that in a day
Breathed your baby lives away,
You could make the world more sweet
Blossoming at Hilda's feet ;
You could add another grace
Even to her perfect face ;
And you bless me still in death
With the rapture of your breath !

Not the largest life bequeaths
Most to man. Our heroes' wreaths,
Dearly bought with many tears,
Sweeten not the bitter years.
Happy who the world can bless
With some drops of happiness ;
Die, and leave around his name—
Like violets' breath—a perfumed fame.

WITH A COPY OF WALTON'S
"ANGLER."

Good father Walton, who so well as thou
Knowest the fisher's art ?
Give me a little lesson. Teach me how
To angle for a heart.

What love-awakening lure? what rod and line?
What artful fishery?
Father, thy hand is skilfuller than mine,
Go, angle thou for me.

Take HILDA fishing with thee by the Dove,
And, on its sandy brink,—
Show her my footprints, and straight speak of love
While she of me doth think.

With thy wise prattle, in my best-loved spots
Do thou her time beguile ;
Pluck heart's-ease for her and forget-me-nots,
And speak of me the while.

Teach her to snare the fishes ; her soft heart
Will melt their pain to see,
And, pitying them, perchance the gentle smart
May make her pity me.

S U S P E N S E.

OH, sweet, brief dream of lover's bliss !
One happy summer's day
I heard a drum, I felt a kiss,
I saw him march away.

I've waited long in hope and fear,
And many times have seen
The woods-fringed hills grow brown and sere
That, when he left, were green.

My aching heart dare not despair ;
It aches, but will not break ;
Hope smiles, but proves a thing of air
When I her hand would take.

My darkest midnight has some gleam
Of joy. In slumber deep
I dream that sorrow is a dream,
And bless God in my sleep ;—

But, waking, find her as of old
Still watching by my bed,
To greet me with her kisses cold
And clammy as the dead.

Each day I think Despair has come
My last weak hope to kill ;
Yet I can never hear a drum
Without a joyful thrill.

I mourn my dead, yet do not dare
Calm resignation learn ;
My foolish eyes will not forbear
To watch for his return.

THE HILL.

A SONG-BIRD soaring toward yon smiling hill
Seems luring me to walk. With eager step
I climb the lofty steep, oft looking back
At the fair landscape, widening as I rise.
Half up I pause o'erwearied, where a rock
Shaggy with lichen offers me a seat,
And, as I rest, look down with happy eyes
Into a nest-like valley.

All rare tints
That autumn knows, her brush hath laid upon
This bit of earth,—dusk purple distances,
Pale green of springing wheat, warm brown of fields,
Dead gold of stubble grain. The uncouth hills,
Wrapped in their forest mantles, she hath touched
With frost-tipped pencil till they show all shades
Of all rich colors ; and like giant kings
Attired for coronation they appear,
Gazing into the river at their feet
In wonder at their new magnificence.

Here on the hill-side silence makes her home,
And rules her down-shod breezes, that scarce raise
A whisper in the pines. The smothered sounds

Of life, that from the lazy village-rise
At intervals, but make more deep the hush
Of each succeeding pause. The pictured world
Lies motionless, and the vibrating air
Is thick with azure haze.

I mount toward the summit. Ah ! the scene
With each step broadens, beautifully dim.
How gently stirs the air ! Yet on yon knoll
A melancholy maple sways in grief
Knee-deep in her own leaves, o'er which she seems
To spread her gaunt arms lovingly, as if
To keep the breeze from stealing them away.
The pines and hemlocks, with their boughs still green,
Stand like apostates, shamed, but full of fear,
While their half-barren comrades faithfully
Do comfort one another with hushed words,
Like fellow-martyrs on the eve of death.
Hark ! Now the wind of night comes stalking through
The forest at my back. The shy grouse hears
His footstep on the leaves and whirrs aloft,
While some lone warbler, hiding in the gloom,
Chaunts in one note a rhapsody of woe.

O lovely year ! Thy beauty saddens me,
For 'tis thy dying blossom. Even thus,
When death has marked our loved ones for his own,
His pity sheds upon their fading forms
The glamour of the skies, that we who weep
May cherish sweeter memories of the lost.

O, year beloved ! as fades this perfect day
So fades thy life. In thy divinest hour

The snows of winter fall upon thy head
And hide thee from our eyes. Yet, God be thanked !
There's nothing dies with dying. Even when
The boisterous winter reigns, and through the woods
Ride vandal winds that blind the trees with snow,
Oppressing earth with icy javelins,
There will come moments, 'midst the howling storm,
When, like a dream of home to one in chains,
The peaceful vision of this tranquil hour
Shall rise to still the longing of our hearts.

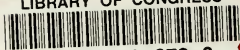
O gentle year ! may my death be like thine !
May I, like thee, grow beautifully old,
Death creeping on as slowly as to thee
Comes winter's snowy twilight. May white hairs
Bring grander days, that, when at last the frost
Lies chill upon my cheek, some kindly voice
May say above my head : " His latest days
Were even his happiest. He passed away
As one who in the evening falls asleep."

THE END.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 015 762 872 0